

Safety

Objective: Reduce chronic maltreatment

Measured by: Families chronically referred to CPS

The Children's Administration strives to ensure that any child who comes to the attention of the administration due to abuse or neglect is not re-abused at the hands of a caregiver. Any family who is the recipient of multiple referrals becomes the subject of increased concern by CPS.

CA has developed a measure designed to track families who have been referred to CPS multiple times regardless of any findings of abuse or neglect. Intake social workers consider the referral history of families when making a determination about whether or not to screen in a new referral for investigation. This review of referral history and resultant CPS response serves as a means of trying to prevent children who have been previously abused from incurring additional abuse and to assist families with children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

The measure for chronically referring families was developed as part of the *Kids Come First Action Agenda*.

The administration defines families that are chronically referring as those for whom one or more of the following criteria are met.

- Three referrals in the prior year
- Four referrals in the prior two years
- Five referrals in the prior three years
- Two or more allegations of sexual or physical abuse in the past two to six CPS referrals
- Two or more founded allegations in the past two to six CPS referrals
- Risk ratings of moderately high or high risk in the past two to six CPS referrals for young, vulnerable or developmentally disabled children whose caretaker has a childhood history of child abuse or neglect
- Biological mother under 21 years of age at the time of her first referral as the parent
- Primary caregiver rated at moderately high or high risk due to caregiver impairments for families referred two or more times to CPS

News Advisory, March 2004
Performance Report, 2003

Washington state has witnessed a significant decrease in the number of families meeting chronic referral screening criteria since tracking of this measure began in 1998.

* Percent of families with accepted CPS or ARS referrals during a given period that are referred and investigated and meet the criteria established in the Kids Come First Chronic Family Screener. Referrals must have occurred more than ten days apart to be counted as separate referrals.

